

RULES

Yours - Mine - Ours - Theirs

by:

J.F. (Jim) Straw

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Throughout recorded history, man has decreed, written, enacted, broken, changed and revoked literally millions of rules, laws, ordinances, covenants, and codes. Each was established to direct the interactions of the parties subject to those rules; whether those rules were political, social, religious, contractual, or simply the procedures of play in a game of sport or chance.

Each time I am called upon to lecture on the subjects of business and / or finance; before groups of neophytes and professionals alike, the question of "rules" is always raised.

"What are the rules of doing business?"

"What rules do the lenders follow in granting a loan?"

By learning the rules, each hopes to play the game more successfully; for, only an egotistical fool would sit-in on a high-stakes poker game without knowing which combinations of cards, according to the rules, have a chance of winning.

There are, in this world, only four (4) "sets of rules" that govern your interaction with other people. Although these four "sets of rules" are interactive and dependent upon each other, each "set of rules" must be understood by you in order that you might govern yourself accordingly. Once you understand the four "sets of rules," you will be better enabled to

play the games of life and business.

Those four "sets of rules" can easily be classified as:

YOUR RULES - the rules that you have established, within yourself and business, to govern your dealings with others in your life or business.

MY RULES - the rules that I have established, within myself and business, to govern my dealing with others in my life or business.

OUR RULES - the rules that we; you and I, have either accepted or established to govern our dealings between us in life or business.

THEIR RULES - the rules established by "governing" bodies; usually referred to as Laws.

When I do business with you, I must either accept your rules; prices, terms, conditions, etc., or I must seek another whose rules are more acceptable to me. Once I know, and have accepted, "Your Rules" in our business dealings, they become "Our Rules," and those rules govern our interaction. If, at a later date, I change my mind and decide I cannot do business with you under "Our Rules," I cannot arbitrarily change "Your Rules," nor demand retribution from our past dealings (unless "Your Rules" are in violation of "Their Rules"). I may, however, discontinue our dealings and seek another whose rules are more acceptable to me. - The same is true of your dealings with me, under "My Rules."

If you cannot do business with me, under "My Rules;" and I cannot do business with you, under "Your Rules," we may, before initiating any business dealings between us, establish a separate and distinct set of rules to govern our dealings. These rules, then, become "Our Rules" by mutual agreement and are, usually, set-down in some form of written contract or agreement. However, situations not specifically covered by our set of rules (contract) may be played either by your rules by you, or my rules by me. Conflicts of this kind are settled by mutual agreement, arbitration, or litigation; which establishes further or additional rules.

Once I know "Your Rules," it is up to me to decide whether or not I will play by those rules. I cannot arbitrarily change your rules to suit my rules; unless we mutually agree to establish a separate and distinct set of rules. But, if I accept your rules, I am bound by those rules until you change your rules, or I find another whose rules are more acceptable to me. - The same holds true of my rules, and your dealings with me.

All too often, in the business world, beginners, not knowing or understanding the four "sets of rules," try to arbitrarily change the rules to

conform to rules they "think" should exist. Or, worse yet, they believe they can change the rules to suit themselves, once they get into the game. - These are the poor wretches who go through life blaming everyone, but themselves, for their mediocre existence. They want to play the game, but only if everyone else's rules are changed to satisfy their avarice, stupidity, or ignorance.

A wise & successful businessman makes his rules to fit the needs (as he perceives them) of the people he will be serving; his customers. A foolish businessman makes his rules to serve only himself. - The successful businessman is as bound by his own rules as are his customers. A foolish businessman makes rules for his dealings and then violates them himself to serve his own purpose. - A successful businessman respects and abides-by the rules imposed upon him by those with whom he deals. The fool tries to arbitrarily change the rules of those he deals with to fit this perception of what the rules should be.

We are all bound by rules. Rules that we have established for our own dealings; rules of those with whom we have dealings; and rules that govern us and our rules.

Bio:

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